



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STARLIGHT THEATRE KICKS OFF EIGHTH YEAR OF
BLUE STAR AWARDS, WELCOMES FIVE NEW SCHOOLS**

Recognition program for high school musical theatre expands its reach

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The 2009-10 school year marks the eighth season for the Blue Star Awards program at Starlight Theatre, and Starlight officials are thrilled to welcome five new area high schools to its musical theatre competition. The new entrants – East Buchanan C-1 High School in Gower, Mo., Lee’s Summit Community Christian School, Lutheran High School in Kansas City, Mo., Raytown High School and Ruskin High School – bring to 49 the number of schools participating.

“The reputation of our Blue Star Awards program grows stronger every year,” said Brad Jackson, associate producer/education & outreach director at Starlight. “We are very pleased to recognize excellence in high school musical theatre programs throughout Kansas City and surrounding communities and celebrate thousands of talented young performers each year. Starlight continues to refine the program to provide the greatest possible value to all of our participating schools, teachers and students.”

The 49 participating high schools have enrolled a total of 55 fall and spring musicals in the 2009-2010 Blue Star Awards – a nearly threefold increase from the 17 schools that participated when

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Starlight and sponsor Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City established Blue Star in 2002-03. Modeled after Broadway's Tony[®] Awards, the Blue Star Awards program this year will recognize outstanding achievement in high school musical theatre in 20 award categories. Award nominees will be announced in early May 2010, and award recipients will be recognized on Starlight's Cohen Community Stage at the annual Blue Star Awards Ceremony on May 27, 2010.

“A key component of the Starlight Theatre mission is to advance performing arts education in the Kansas City community,” said Denton Yockey, Starlight president and executive producer. “Thanks to the generosity of our Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City sponsor and the hard work of our Starlight staff and local theatre professionals, we have been able to provide much-deserved recognition and highly valued feedback to local high school theatre faculty and students for nearly a decade.”

High schools pay a \$55 fee annually to participate. For those that want to submit two shows during a single school year, an additional \$300 fee is applied. Each high school submits the dates of its fall or spring musical, and Starlight dispatches three adjudicators (local performers, performing arts instructors and other professionals) to attend a performance anonymously and submit their comments and ratings. The adjudicators' results are used to select up to six nominees in each of the 20 award categories.

For their investment, schools and their students receive several benefits, including a summary of adjudicator comments to use as a basis for performance and production improvements for the future, the opportunity to apply for two \$2,500 Rising Star scholarships, and performance and recognition opportunities at the Blue Star Awards Ceremony.

New to the program last year was the opportunity for the winners of the Blue Star Awards for Outstanding Lead Actor and Actress to advance to the new National High School Musical Theatre Awards competition in New York and vie for a four-year scholarship to New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. Sixteen regional theatres, including Starlight, participated in the first annual NHSMFTA competition. Outstanding Lead Actor honoree Keegan Rice of

Shawnee Mission West High School and Outstanding Lead Actress honoree Samantha Steinmetz of Blue Valley High School were sponsored by Starlight in last summer's inaugural competition. The theatre will continue its involvement in the NHSMFTA program in summer 2010. Schools that have enrolled in the Blue Star Awards program this fall and the dates and titles of their musicals are noted on the following pages.

Teachers and students who are interested in information about the 2009-10 Blue Star Awards program can visit www.kcstarlight.com and click on Education. The spring deadline for Blue Star applications is Jan. 9, 2010.

Starlight Theatre

Presenting Broadway entertainment since 1951, the non-profit Starlight Theatre Association is Kansas City's oldest and largest performing arts organization. The Association operates, programs and maintains the largest stage in the United States, as well as the 16-acre Starlight Theatre complex. While assuming all annual operating costs for the complex, the Association also raises funds for capital improvements and a variety of programs, including national Broadway musical performances, concerts, community outreach and education. Since 2000, the Association has contributed more than \$25 million of privately funded improvements to the Kansas City, Mo.-owned Starlight Theatre. Each Broadway season, Starlight donates more than 11,000 tickets to its performances to regional non-profit organizations serving the disadvantaged.

In 2008, Starlight Theatre was selected as the "Favorite Performing Arts Venue or Organization" in the Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association's Visitors' Choice Awards program. Starlight also received a Gold Award for "Best Performing Arts Venue" and a Silver Award for "Best Theatre" in *Ingram's* 2009 Best of Business Kansas City Awards. The theatre seats approximately 8,000 and is located in Swope Park.

Schools and Fall 2009 Musicals in Blue Star Awards Program at Starlight Theatre (listed chronologically by date of performance)

Shawnee Mission North

Rent

October 21-22 at 7 p.m.

October 24 at 7 p.m.

Ruskin

Dreamgirls

October 28 & 30 at 7 p.m..

Olathe South

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

November 5-7 at 7:30 p.m.

St. Thomas Aquinas

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying

November 5 at 7 p.m.

November 7-8 at 7 p.m.

Raymore-Peculiar

Into the Woods

November 5-7 at 7:30 p.m.

November 8 at 2:30 p.m.

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Lutheran

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown

November 6-7 at 7 p.m.

Lee's Summit North

West Side Story

November 6-7 at 7 p.m.

November 8 at 2 p.m.

November 13-14 at 7 p.m.

Kearney

The Pajama Game

November 10 at 7:30 p.m.

November 12-13 at 7:30 p.m.

November 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Piper

The Pajama Game

November 11-14 at 7 p.m.

St. Teresa's Academy

Zombie Prom

November 11-14 at 7:30 p.m.

Gardner-Edgerton

Grease

November 12 at 7 p.m.

November 14 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

North Kansas City

A Chorus Line

November 12-14 at 7:30 p.m.

Oak Park

Cinderella

November 12-14 at 7 p.m.

Park Hill South

Once Upon a Mattress

November 12-14 at 7:30 p.m.

Platte County

Grease

November 12-14 at 7:30 p.m.

Shawnee Mission Northwest

Paint Your Wagon

November 12-14 at 7:30 p.m.

Shawnee Mission South

The Boy Friend

November 12-14 at 7 p.m.

De Soto

The Music Man

November 12 & 14 at 7 p.m.

Basehor-Linwood

Beauty and the Beast

November 12-14 at 7 p.m.

November 15 at 2 p.m.

Lee's Summit

Carousel

November 13 at 8 p.m.

November 14 at 7:30 p.m.

November 20-21 at 7:30 p.m.

November 22 at 2:30 p.m.

Olathe North

Starmites

November 19 at 7 p.m.

November 20 at 10 a.m.

November 21 at 7 p.m.

Olathe Northwest

Bye Bye Birdie

November 19-21 at 7 p.m.

Park Hill

The Music Man

November 19-21 at 7:30 p.m.

Raytown

The Sound of Music

November 19-21 at 7 p.m.

Spring Hill

Pippin

November 19-21 at 7 p.m.

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Winnetonka

Oklahoma

November 19-21 at 7 p.m.

Grandview

Seussical the Musical

November 19-20 at 7 p.m.

November 21 at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Lee's Summit Community Christian

Cinderella

November 19-20 at 7 p.m.

November 21 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Truman

The Music Man

November 19-21 at 7 p.m.

November 22 at 2 p.m.

Excelsior Springs

Aida

November 20-21 at 7:30 p.m.

Cameron

Honk

November 20-21 at 7 p.m.

East Buchanan C-1

The Boy Friend

November 20-21 at 7 p.m.

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